cruel and immoral practices and to interference in lawsuits and disturbance of cherished customs and institutions—all contributed to it. Famine added to the unrest. After 1897 sporadic outbreaks against the foreigner were frequent.

The Northeast was the scene of most of the violence. Here was the court, now given over to reaction. Here were some particularly anti-foreign officials, notably Yii Hsien, who was first Governor in Shantung and then in Shansi. Here, too, the Empress Dowager ordered the local trainbands to be in readiness to defend the country. These units of the militia, sometimes known as the I Ho T'uan, were also termed the I Ho Ch'iian, or "Righteous Harmony Fists." From this latter designation and from the gymnastic exercises which were practiced came the Western name Boxers. The groups early adopted such slogans as "Protect the country, destroy the foreigner/' and "Protect the Ch'ing (dynasty), destroy the foreigner." Into their membership pressed many of the rowdies who, in China, as elsewhere, are to be found in every community. They were also associated with some of the secret societies which abound in China. As had long been customary in such popular military organizations, charms and occult practices were employed which the users believed would render them invulnerable to enemy weapons.

It was in 1899 that the Boxers began seriously to annoy Westerners. In Shantung, where the anti-foreign Yii Hsien was Governor, they persecuted Christians and killed an English missionary. Yii Hsien, under pressure from the powers replaced by Yuan Shih-k'ai, was welcomed at court as a hero and was appointed Governor of Shansi. By June, 1900, the situation in Chihli (Hopei) had become acute. Christians were being

massacred and aliens were in danger. To safeguard the latter, and especially the legations in Peking, on June 10th an international body of troops left Tientsin. It was attacked, however, and with difficulty made its way back. To protect the foreign community in Tientsin, now in danger, the Taku forts, commanding the river approach from the sea, were stormed by parties made up of six nationalities (June 17th).

Not unnaturally, this last act was interpreted by the Boxers and the court as tantamount to a declaration of war. In retaliation, the Tientsin concessions were attacked and the diplomatic